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# THE STATE AS DISCIPLINARIAN

By Oswald Garrison Villard

Fortified by the completely free hand given to them by the Roosevelt Administration during World War II, the War Department, its military journalists and its leading generals are now engaged in a nation-wide campaign to force Congress to vote for peacetime military conscription, which has recently been publicly described by Secretary of War Patterson as "a must."

On the theory that this form of involuntary servitude will smell sweeter under another name, the President and some of the military propagandists are dropping the word military and calling it "universal training." Late in December, when appointing an advisory civilian commission "to study the various plans for a training program," composed of a group predominantly favorable to conscription, Mr. Truman said:

> "I don't like to think of it as a universal military training program. I want it to be a universal training program, giving our young people a background in the disciplinary approach of getting along with one another, informing them of their physical makeup, and what it means to take care of this Temple which God gave us." [Emphasis supplied.]

In his Annual Message to Congress, on January 6, the President nevertheless asserted that: "The development of a trained citizen reserve is also vital to our national security."

Still a third objective -- of education in citizenship -- has been put forward by Mr. Truman in these words: "I want our young people to be informed on what this government is, what it stands for -- its responsibilities. And I think the best way to do this is through a universal training program."

That was Hitler's idea also -- the indoctrination of the entire youth of his country by military men. It is the exact opposite of the American tradition that all public education should be under the control of local, not national, government. It is the exact opposite of Washington's thoughtful condemnation, in the Farewell Address, of:

> ". . . those overgrown military establishments, which under any form of Government are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty."

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In his Annual Message Mr. Truman swung back to universal military training. The army surpasses him, however, in its juggling with words. Thus, in a recent widely-distributed pamphlet on this subject, it is solemnly asserted that: "Universal military training is not universal military service. It is not 'conscription' as practiced by European Powers. The entire army of the United States, including the regular army, National Guard, and organized reserves, normally would be made up wholly of volunteers in time of peace." [The army's underscore.]

Two pages further on the pamphlet says: "All male citizens who have passed their 18th birthday but have not yet reached the age of 20 years would be required to take military training if physically fit." [My underscore.] Giving up a year of one's life under government duress, with the threat of prison for non-compliance, constitutes, in the opinion of the authors of this remarkable document, voluntary service!

Again, the pamphlet declares that: "The young men in training would NOT be soldiers. They would receive military training from the Army and Navy, but would not be liable for any peacetime service in the armed forces." Yet in the next sentence, which is italicized, the pamphlet remarks: "The basic obligation would be for 1 year of military training." Next it says: "We also reject, from social considerations, the idea of permanent peacetime conscription for military service."

What could more clearly illustrate complete intellectual dishonesty, or, to be more charitable, complete intellectual confusion, than repeated contradictions which must be apparent to any analytical mind? Yet some are taken in by the efforts to portray "universal training" as a noble social effort in behalf of public health; by claims that drill and military indoctrination would check the juvenile crime which war augmented; and by assertions that the atom bomb has merely "tremendously expanded the scope of warfare" and called for greater numbers of ground troops!

The contradictions in the War Department propaganda do not stop with those cited. It will be remembered that the men in training are "NOT" to be soldiers. Yet it appears that "in six months, UMT trainees will be given approximately 1,000 hours of intense thorough instruction in these subjects [unit training, basic weapons and some military specialties], equivalent to approximately 5 years of periodic training in the National Guard or active Reserve."

After six months of this the trainee might well ask himself what else could have been done to make him a fighter. And, according to the army, this training will have extraordinary results for army welfare.

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Thus, it will (1) furnish to the National Guard and to the active Reserve units trained men (but not soldiers) who will fill their ranks as needed and (2) make it possible for those organizations "to move quickly" into further training, thus "advancing their readiness for emergencies." (3) It would make possible a National Guard now planned to be three times its pre-war figure, while the Reserve would "constitute a great pool of officers and key enlisted men derived from several sources." (4) It would therefore make unnecessary "a large regular army," although Secretary Patterson is now asking for 1,070,000 regulars.

Finally (5), the pamphlet insists that the conscription plan alone will save the United States from war because "nations are seldom attacked by aggressors when there is substantial doubt in the minds of the aggressor that its victims could be quickly overcome. . . . Weakness is always an inducement to attack." And so the cadets who are not to be trained as soldiers will nevertheless appear to be soldiers to all except Americans who will somehow understand that because they are not soldiers they will be just as effective as soldiers for military purposes. There is something highly distasteful about such double talk.

It would be very easy, did space permit, to cite expert after expert who assert that an atomic war would be so short as to make it impossible to mobilize the "great pool of officers and key enlisted men" and the 600,000 National Guard and move them over our railroads. Incidentally, these railroads at this hour, according to Secretary Patterson, are actually unable for lack of boxcars to move the necessary grain and coal to the Atlantic Seaboard to keep people from starving and freezing in Europe.

One authority after another has certified that the great pool of enlisted men, trained not as soldiers to be soldiers, would be of no value from a military point of view within three years after their having served, and that the War Department in a country like this could not possibly keep track of 12 to 14 millions of men and inform them of their immediate rallying point in case of sudden air attack.

Indeed, the highest military sources have stated that it would take a year to restore to the service those who have had actual war experience and have now returned to civil life, and Secretary Patterson declared, on September 3, 1946, that: "It would take six months to mobilize the strength we had a year ago."

The disastrous effect of the proposed program on privately-controlled education is another, though vitally important, subject.

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This current effort to conceal the nature of a proposed plan or action by giving it a pleasant name, and by glossing over its true character, is unfortunately not an isolated instance of official American deception in recent years. Thus, it was not war to fire on German naval forces; to land American troops in Iceland months before Pearl Harbor; to place commissioned American destroyers, as has been testified, under the command of British officers for war purposes.

The fiction of calling Russia a democracy, with aims similar to our own, is a somewhat shopworn instance of the same attitude, which has already led to sad disillusionment. Righteous condemnation of our former enemies does not justify Allied violation of the Geneva conventions by keeping in slavery millions of war prisoners legally entitled to their freedom. Still another assertion with dubious relation to the facts is the statement, in the Potsdam Agreement, that: "It is not the intention of the Allies to destroy or enslave the German people."

But there is not the excuse of war psychology, or of imminent national danger, for the pretense that peacetime conscription is in accordance with the American tradition. The device is much more in accord with the philosophy which the war was fought to defeat. And the fact that this conscription is clearly directed against a fellow member of the United Nations does not make the picture more pleasant.

It is impossible for me to believe that "universal training," as now advocated, commends itself to most army officers. Many of these sincerely believe that, until relations with Russia are stabilized, or the much-publicized UN international police established, conscription may be an evil necessity. But that is very different from beguiling the public by claiming that conscription means a better and happier America.

Fortunately, some military voices speak words of sanity. General Eisenhower is quoted as having said that a state of complete preparedness for war would only be a little less disastrous than war itself:

> "Constant dread of war is better only by comparison than war itself. Deadly fear diverts from productive activity man's efforts and resources. It stifles clear thinking and stultifies moral and spiritual beliefs."

It was a great American soldier and statesman, General Tasker H. Bliss, who remarked to me during the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris: "If we go in for universal service and militarism we shall be as great brutes as the German militarists in twenty years."

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 6

By Frank C. Hanighen February 5, 1947

The hitherto unpublicized story of how Hoover accepted his mission to Germany can now be told. As described in this column last week, the Truman Administration had recently become aware of the appalling results of its policy in Germany, and had come to realize the immense cost necessary to revive that country and thereby rehabilitate Europe. The White House feared public reaction to the disclosure of these facts, long concealed from the people. There is now complete confirmation of this column's suspicion, voiced last week, that the Administration was prompted to call in Hoover as a protection against such retributive criticism and as an instrument to draw Republican support for the necessary expenditures.

Mr. Hoover accepted the mission on his own terms. When Truman wanted to label it a "food" survey, Hoover insisted that the directive be widened -- and the public told of it -- to include examination of the whole economy of Germany. Truman yielded and let Mr. Hoover write his own directive in his own words on a scratch pad.

At this point, forces in the State Department which still cling to the Morgenthau ideas of a Carthaginian peace tried to "queer" the mission. Some in the division concerned with German economy, headed by Dr. Charles P. Kindleberger, formerly of the Treasury, fed out to reporters an alarmist view, saying that it was dangerous to send such a mission in view of the approaching Moscow Conference, the delicacy of the general situation and the possibility that Mr. Hoover might tamper with the "level of industry" agreement, the core of the Morgenthau plan. When Mr. Hoover heard of this maneuver he protested sharply to Mr. Truman and the latter promised that the culprits would be "punished." So far no signs of their chastisement have been noted. Congressional committees which talk of investigating State Department personnel might well take notice of this division.

Slapped or unslapped, they knew whereof they spoke, when they mentioned "level of industry." The agreement of that name has throttled down to disastrous levels all industrial output, but especially that of heavy industry and chemicals. As all experts on Germany know, that country cannot be rehabilitated if its only exports are crockery, toys, etc. Germany must, as formerly, export machinery and chemicals in order to survive. That means revival of heavy industry -- which the Russians oppose -- and that means also purchase of machinery supplies to get the wheels moving, and food to enable the workers to perform a day's labor. All this Mr. Hoover knows in broad outline. His mission, as he himself described it, is therefore to examine the details and make recommendations so that the cost to the American taxpayer may be lightened.

The explosive fact, however, which remains closely concealed in Government conference rooms is that expenditure of from one to two billion dollars may be necessary. Already there has been much exploration of this topic. Some sources believe that the money can be raised through private loans like those given private German firms after the last war, but made less unattractive as first mortgages on German industry, having priority over all reparations. But Russia insists on reparations, and investors on security. The consequences of the Hoover mission may indeed be complicated and controversial.

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Labor Briefs ---- With the HCofL (high cost of living), AFofL and CIO all showing signs of decline, employers are beginning to write their own tickets and summarily toss them to labor agents to read. Thus U. S. Steel has told Phil Murray

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curtly that it will not even talk about wages until a settlement with the miners is reached. As for the latter, odds are on John L. Lewis postponing his strike date of March 31. If steel workers get 10 cents an hour increase, they will be lucky, say labor reporters; and the same goes for the miners -- though they may get a little more.

John L. has turned his atomic energies to inter-union affairs. He reportedly wants to be the next President of the AFL, which by the way is in a much less unhappy condition than the CIO; and Dubinsky and Hutcheson are pushing his claim before the AFL Executive Council (or "gathering of the barbarian kings", as Lewis once called it) now meeting at Miami. It is believed that Lewis, as head of AFL, would direct the dismemberment of the CIO. (No faith is placed in the sincerity of the AFL's offer to merge in "organic unity" with the CIO.) Lewis' organizers, it is said, have done much to persuade locals in Connecticut to withdraw from their Communist-dominated CIO unions.

President Truman's jubilant announcement of an anti-strike pledge on the part of building contractors organizations and building trades unions is taken with more than a grain of amusement. There never are nation-wide strikes among these crafts; only local conflicts in which national union officers have little influence. But it sounded nice -- until the day following, when seven building crafts in New York by refusing to work eight instead of seven hours "jeopardized the no-strike agreement" (New York Times, February 3).

It is noted that Senator Ives (N.Y.) at the hearings of the Senate Labor Committee (others beside Joe Ball do attend) asks the most intelligent and respectful questions of his new and dear friend, Senator Taft (O.), who is chairman of the charming Committee. Senator Taft replies in the middle-of-the-road fashion for which he has become famous. It is a beguiling scene of party harmony. But a few observers think that the very, very respectful questions of Senator Ives are just a teensy-weensy bit to the Left of the Chairman's answers. Some coarse observers therefore have gone so far as to suggest that the junior Senator from New York is -- shall we say? -- "needling" the senior Senator from Ohio. They recall that the former is a friend of Governor Dewey. But didn't the distinguished Governor say he isn't a candidate for the Presidency? And hasn't Senator Taft said the same thing? It all goes to show how unfair are the suspicious. Incidentally, haven't we got away from the subject of Labor?

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The Administration will discard a valuable ace in the Far Eastern bargaining game with Russia if it orders withdrawal of all American military forces from China. Since the Dairen incident, the State Department has been demanding that Russia comply with its long overdue pledge to surrender to the Chinese Nationalist Government control of that key port and the Manchurian railway. Morally, the United States has a strong obligation to see this through because our intervention brought about the Russo-Chinese agreement on Manchuria. Legally, we have a right to maintain troops in China until repatriation of all Japanese prisoners; and Russia still retains large numbers of the latter.

Our forces in China, it is true, are small, but they have a prestige value. To surrender to the world-wide Communist demand for troop withdrawal means "loss of face" in a country where "face" is a big factor. In short, evacuation would toss away a high card which might help to bring about observance of the Russo-China agreement on Manchuria and of the traditional American policy of the Open Door -- rather important diplomatic objectives in the Far East.

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Behold M. Joseph Winiewicz, Ambassador to the United States from the Republic of Poland, advertised so assiduously by PM as that great "progressive" and "demo-

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cratic" and "anti-fascist" state. The Ambassador has quite a record. It is recalled that in pre-war days he was editor of the extreme Right Wing Dziennik Poznanski, a provincial paper described as "highly nationalistic and anti-semitic." He was also correspondent of the Warsaw Gazeta Polska, similarly described, which was the organ of the famous Colonel Beck, so often pilloried by American "liberals." In fact, M. Winiewicz could well qualify as a target for criticism from all American "liberals," if he did not possess one saving grace.

After the fall of Poland, he escaped from the country and in 1942 was working for the Polish-Government-in-Exile in London where he acquired a reputation as a strong proponent of Polish annexation of eastern German territory. This noble design is said to have won him the appointment to Washington, where his diplomatic objective is expected to be American recognition of Polish annexation of these German provinces. He may succeed, for it is a long time since the slogan "no annexations and no indemnities" symbolized conceptions of peace and justice among Americans, liberals and all.

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This column's recent pieces on the necessity of a sounder and less expensive military establishment have brought expressions of approval from various military figures. They stress the need for a shift of emphasis in our preparedness away from mass armies and big navies to the two fields of new weapons and intelligence. Some, however, add that the United States must have an up-to-date and formidable striking air force of about 5,000 planes, and an industrial program capable of supplying and expanding such a force in an emergency. Such an air arm, plus new weapons and an augmented intelligence service is what any potential enemy really fears most, they say, rather than "ten million sharpshooters." It may be significant of the wide support for such ideas that the Veterans of Foreign Wars, second largest veteran group in the country, has advocated a "striking air force" in a letter to President Truman made public on December 11, 1946.

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Falling prices of foodstuffs, however welcome to the urban housewife, suggest some unpleasant possibilities in the agricultural field, say expert observers. The farm situation is moving around, like a merry-go-round, back towards the position it occupied in 1932, when price drops and farm surpluses led to rural ruin and gave birth to -- among other things -- the phenomenon of Henry A. Wallace. Fear of a return to such conditions is said to prompt the surprising complacency which farm organization leaders showed recently toward Secretary Anderson's "allotment" proposals which bear an ominous kinship to "crop control" and "agricultural planning." Lacking any other solution to what seems to be on the way, farm leaders submit; perhaps on the theory that an ounce of the old medicine may ease if not prevent the return of former pains.

The picture may seem too black, but this is the way observers see it. Henry Wallace's agricultural planning -- mass murder of baby pigs, and all -- started with the New Deal in 1933. Had it not been for the drouths of 1934 and 1936, the Wallace plan would have led to no effective cuts in production. After those disasters, the ever-normal granary started to fill up until by 1939 another big reservoir of surpluses threatened to break with a drop of prices, a rise in farm bankruptcies and another agrarian political revolt. The onset of World War II saved the situation.

Will another drouth, or another war, save the next agricultural crisis? Barring such unhappy developments, great trouble for the American farmer is seen; and also, incidentally, for the Republican Party which so heavily depends on his political favor. Without apocalyptic intervention, "save the farmer" will again be heard by 1949, it is anticipated, unless some as yet undiscovered scheme which can command the farmers' consent proves successful in regulating production. Farsighted agrarian leaders are doing some hard thinking.

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# Notes and Quotes

A constructive and humanitarian movement among American soldiers in Germany is described by Staff Correspondent Philip W. Whitcomb in the Baltimore Sun (January 24): "Over 7,000 clubs and groups for German youths between 10 and 18 years old are being operated by American soldiers and civilians. A third of them are sporting, a third religious and the others devoted to some hobby or of a general character. Over a third of the 2,100,000 Germans aged 10 to 18 in the American zone and sectors now belong to these groups and more join every day.

"Only the enthusiasm of the Americans as individuals has created and enlivened this activity. . . . it is the irrepressibility of the individual in giving afternoons and evenings and Sundays to playing with German youth that has given the whole movement its unexpected and boomlike character. Their instinctive certainty is that the prevention of future war by Germany depends . . . on such things as the creation of many millions of intimate links of friendship between individual Americans and those Germans who should be running Germany 30 years from now -- the 10-to-18-year olds of today.

"If we cold-shouldered these children," said a regular Army officer's wife, "they would grow up with only one set of heroes -- their own dead or wounded fathers and brothers and the SS men who fought to the last cartridge in a thousand battles of the Alamo or were wiped out in a thousand Custer's Last Fights. We're adding another set of living heroes and it's going to make a big difference 25 or 30 years from now, when the millions of youths that we touch in this way are asked to vote yes or no to another war."

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The practice of boondoggling, with the death of the New Deal, seems to have moved to Britain, where one aspect of the Labour Party's administration is treated with scornful mirth by Conservative M.P.'s and satire by the Conservative newsletter Tidings, which quotes a London Times report of the House of Commons debate on November 25, 1946. "Replying to Mr. Gammans (Hornsey, Con.) Mr. Strachey [Minister of Food] said the chief purpose of the Food Leader scheme was to provide a voluntary link between the ordinary housewife and the cookery and nutrition experts of the Ministry (Opposition laughter). The food Leaders numbered 23,000. Mr. Gammans asked what these people were supposed to do. Mr. Strachey: 'They are supposed to give nutritional leadership' (Opposition laughter). 'What is amusing in that I cannot see.' Sir Waldrom Smithers (Orpington, Con.): 'You have no sense of humour' (renewed laughter). Mr. Gammans: 'What is meant by nutritional leadership?' Mr. Strachey: 'These women explain the nutritional value of foodstuffs' (Laughter)."

Tidings comments ironically: "We do not know why Opposition Members put Mr. Strachey to the needless pain of defining 'nutritional leadership' as 'explaining the nutritional value of foodstuffs.' In the old pre-planned-humour days this was called 'teaching your grandmother to suck eggs,' and as dried eggs are clearly much more difficult to suck than the earlier, unplanned kind, food-leadership, explanation and instruction in the matter are plainly necessary."

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Mr. Tom Harrisson writing about a recent trip to France in the London New Statesman and Nation (January 4) reports that most of the jokes concern the inflation, as for example: "A lunatic recovers after twenty years. He is delighted, on visiting his once favourite restaurant, to eat exactly a 1927 meal. But the bill comes to 2,000 francs. He only has 20, the past price. The proprietor says he will call the police. The customer insists: 'Sorry, but this is all I have!' He puts down 20 francs -- in gold. The proprietor embraces him, gives him 2,000 francs in change, bows him out. The ex-lunatic, deciding everybody else can't be mad, sadly returns to his asylum."



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